



Independent, fact-based news for Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit counties

News of the week: Dec. 2, 2022

Dear Reader —

We're halfway into our [2X fundraising campaign](#) and want to thank those who have donated and to encourage those who have not to donate what you can to help grow community-supported, not-for-profit local news.

This week, Rena Kingery examines how [environmental education](#) has grown from the first Earth Day to multiple programs in the Salish Sea. Nancy DeVaux reports on how water supply is considered in San Juan County's [plans for growth](#). And Matt Benoit dives deep into the most recent process for being laid to rest, [aquamation](#).

These stories and many others are the kinds of stories we want to bring you every week, and why we're asking for donations. Every dollar donated this month to *Salish Current* will be doubled, thanks to generous local donors and national [NewsMatch](#) funders. [Please donate](#) and help us report more in-depth stories, compile local news summaries and provide a forum for spirited community essays and opinions.

What *Salish Current* is trying to accomplish is possible only because readers like you donate to keep our stories free for all to read. That's what not-for-profit, community-supported journalism is all about.

I am happy to announce that *Salish Current* will have the help and guidance of a diverse and talented trio of new board members who will join our [current directors](#), Jill Bernstein, Bill Dietrich, Mary Lynn Lyke, Riley Sweeney, Betsy Gross and me. Our new board members are:

- Janet Brownell, San Juan County: nonprofit leader, retired screenwriter
- Eric Hirst, Whatcom County: environmental advocate, retired engineer
- Jessica Gigot, Skagit County: poet, farmer, writing coach

With the guidance of our board of directors and community advisors and with you, our community of readers, *Salish Current* will grow in readership and news reporting.

[Please donate today](#) — a one-time donation, a monthly donation, a first-time small donation — all will be doubled and be put towards fact-based, community journalism. Thank you!

— Amy Nelson, Publisher

Want more environmental news? [Salish Sea News and Weather](#) is a weekday curated compilation of news from Salish Sea news sources. Free via email or on the web.

[Salish Sea News Week in Review Dec. 2, 2022](#): Mutt Friday, Salish Sea map, Dungeness crab, orca prey, green crab, “underwater Amazon”, B.C. LNG, Vancouver port zero-emissions, vanishing lichen, tribe net pens

Salish Current affirms its commitment to work for truth, justice, equity and healing for all people.

#SayTheirNames #BlackLivesMatter

#NoJusticeNoPeace

News from the *Salish Current*

[Does environmental education change behavior?](#)



YEP! students remove invasive English ivy from a Douglas fir tree in Larabee State Park, as part of a program in designing and leading climate action and stewardship projects.

By Rena Kingery: Measuring the effectiveness of

environmental education in changing behavior is a source of optimism and inspiration around the Salish Sea. [Read more.](#)

[Looking ahead in the San Juans: island water planning ... 2036](#)



Where, possibly ... but how much? Dowsers, also known as water witches, were believed to be able to locate water underground with the help of “divining rods.” Today, hydrologists these days use technologies such as ground-penetrating radar

to identify, map and assess the volume of aquifers.

By Nancy DeVaux: How do you plan for the future water supply when you don’t have all the information? [Read more.](#)

[New options change choices for that final resting place](#)



New options—with varying costs and environmental impacts—for laying the body to rest after death are gradually taking hold, in cities and in rural areas.

By Matt Benoit: A cultural shift is underway from traditional burials and cremations to terramation, a composting process, and aquamation, a water-based process. [Read more.](#)

[Letters to the Editor](#)

- **Moscato:** Fraser River series provides new perspectives
- **McCoy:** Building B.C. ferries

Our policy: Salish Current welcomes letters to the editor from our readers. Letters should be sent with the writer’s name, address and daytime phone number. Those accepted for publication will focus on issues addressed in news articles or commentaries in Salish Current and be factual. No snark or put-downs will be acceptable; general nastiness will be rejected. Letters should not exceed 300 words and may be edited for length and clarity. Salish Current will publish letters sent to the editor at its sole discretion.

News from around the region

(The links found here may have limited access for those who don't subscribe to the source publication. Sorry for any inconvenience!)

Health and Safety

E. coli. The state Department of Health has directed the town of Concrete to chlorinate its water after months of unsatisfactory samples and one positive test for E. coli. The town is under a boil-water advisory. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Education

Coach resigns. Kevin Beason, Sehome High School's head football coach for six seasons, resigned. His team this season was the center of a hazing incident that forced a forfeit. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Nature

Bigger buffers. A new report released by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) recommends that the Legislature increase the vessel buffer for recreational boaters, commercial whale-watching operators and guided paddle tours around Southern Resident killer whales to 1,000 yards to further support orca recovery. ([WDFW](#))

Pescatarian prey. Part 1 of this two-part series included gulls, crows, a merganser, a tern, an auklet and a guillemot with their fish. Here's a look at fish caught by more of our expert local pescatarian, or fish-eating, feathered friends. We begin with the Great Blue Heron. ([Rainshadow Journal](#))

Green crabs. The 3rd Quarter report by the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife reports over 250,000 European green crabs trapped in state waters so far this year, including those in the Lummi Sea Pond. ([KGMI](#))

Business

New boat. All American Marine of Bellingham is contracted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to build a 52-foot research vessel off the coast of Sapelo Island, Georgia, in the Gray's Reef

National Marine Sanctuary. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Stored energy. Battery energy storage facilities are proposed for a 14-acre site in Sedro-Woolley in Skagit County to store wind and solar energy. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Strike vote. Workers at the Sehome Village shopping center Starbucks voted 15-6 to unionize, joining two other Bellingham locations to organize and bargain collectively. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Fish barge. Northline Seafoods will build a 400-foot mobile commercial salmon processing platform in Bellingham and take it to Alaska to process salmon and return to Bellingham to sell the fish. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Community

Waterfront housing. The Millworks Project under the aegis of the Whatcom Community Foundation has secured an agreement with the Port of Seattle for Mercy Housing Northwest to begin construction before the end of this year on a four-story apartment complex at Cornwall and Laurel streets comprised of 83 affordable housing units and a childcare facility. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Transition housing. The City of Lynden wanted to limit community residential facilities locating in residential areas but is getting an education about how state laws support emergency housing and shelters and how the federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

Database. Community Resources for Help, Support and Relief online at the Whatcom County Library is the go-to place for trusted help if you need information in case of emergencies or other difficult situations. [Check it out here.](#)

Public safety levy. The City of Anacortes will ask voters to vote on raising its property tax levy to pay for more police and fire personnel. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Salary. The Bellingham Salary Commission voted unanimously in November to increase the salary of Bellingham City Council members next year to \$67,000 in 2023, an increase over their current salary of

\$35,652, which includes a monthly meeting stipend of \$500. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Commentary

Blue provinces. Ross Anderson asks, which Washington counties vote consistently over 70% Democrat? That would be King, Jefferson and San Juan. ([Post Alley](#))

Arts and Leisure

Messiah. Whatcom Chorale and Sinfonia presents the seasonal favorite on Dec. 9, 7 p.m., Mount Baker Theatre. [Info and tickets.](#)

Arts fest. Allied Arts 43rd Annual Holiday Festival of the Arts is held until Dec. 24 and features over 100 local artisans and craftspeople presenting their holiday goods. [Info.](#)

Lowell Skoog. Skier, climber, writer and photographer Lowell Skoog talks about his latest book "Written in the Snows" on Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m., at Backcountry Essentials, Bellingham. [Info here.](#)

Jump in!

Willow. Join in the willow-cutting harvest at Coal Creek with Skagit Land Trust on Dec. 2, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. [Info.](#)

Wait, there's more. Join Skagit Land Trust for a work party at the beautiful Barney Lake property planting willow stakes, Dec. 3, 9 a.m.–Noon. [Info.](#)

Lights! Lynden's Lighted Christmas Parade, Dec. 3, 6 p.m. Holiday carolers and a dazzling display of lighted trucks, cars, floats, wagons, farm equipment and more! The procession starts at Fairway Center and travels along Front Street throughout downtown Lynden.

Boat lights! The Holiday Magic Lighted Boat Parade sponsored by the Bellingham Yacht Club lights up the waterfront beginning at 5:30 p.m. on Dec. 3.

North Fork towns. Local history author Michael Impero will share pictures and research from his new book about the towns, people and events of the North Fork: Kendall, Maple Falls, Glacier, and Shuksan. Highlights include the history of the Nooksack Indians, local families like the Zenders and their semipro baseball

team, famous murders, gold mines and the making of a few motion pictures. [North Fork Library](#), Dec. 10, 1–3 p.m.

Samish party. Join Skagit Land Trust at Samish Miles Conservation Area to remove invasive species. This work party will be an opportunity for folks to see the Samish Miles Conservation Area which is not open to general public access. Dec. 16, 9 a.m.–Noon. [Register here](#).

Vegan eats. Check out the Bellingham Vegan Winter Market on Dec. 18 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at V Go's Grocery, 1215 Cornwall Ave. [More info](#).

Elections

Proposition 5. The Whatcom County Children's Initiative Levy passed by a margin of 20 votes after the final tally included all verified signatures on ballots. [\(KGMI\)](#) The vote showed a clear demarcation between Bellingham/tribal and other county voters. [\(CDN/paywall\)](#)

Skagit PUD. At final count, Corrin Hamburg defeated incumbent Germaine Kornegay with 51.14% of all votes cast. [\(Skagit County Auditor\)](#)

Government

San Juan County

The League of Women Voters of San Juan County summarized actions of the San Juan Council's Nov. 29 and 30 meetings. [\(San Juan Journal\)](#)

Council agendas and recordings are found [here](#).

City of Bellingham

The council will meet on Dec. 5. [Agenda items](#) include:

Community and Economic Development Committee:

- Interlocal Agreement with Whatcom County for Ground-Level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) Services. [Staff memo](#).
- Consideration of Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism's 2023 Tourism Promotion Area Budget. [Staff memo](#).

- Consideration of the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee's 2023 Budget Recommendations. [Staff memo.](#)

Committee of the Whole:

- [Salary Commission Report.](#)
- An Ordinance Adopting the 2023-2024 Biennial Budget. [Ordinance.](#)

The council will meet again on Dec. 12.

The council will hold a public hearing on Dec. 12 at 7 p.m. on the [2022-2026 Greenways Strategic Plan.](#) This plan will guide spending of Greenways levy funds.

Whatcom County

The council met on Nov. 22. [Agenda items](#) included:

Public hearing:

- The council adopted 5-2 (Byrd, Elenbaas opposed) an ordinance adopting the final budget of Whatcom County for the Biennium 2023-2024. [Ordinance.](#)
- The council adopted 6-1 (Byrd opposed) an ordinance authorizing the levy of taxes for county and state purposes in Whatcom County for the year of 2023. [Ordinance.](#)

Other items:

- The council adopted 7-0 an ordinance establishing the Plantation Rifle Range Lead Reclamation and Capital Improvements Fund and establishing a project-based budget for the Plantation Rifle Range Lead Reclamation and Capital Improvements project.

The council will meet again on Dec. 6. [Agenda items](#) include:

Public hearing:

- Ordinance authorizing the levy of taxes for services for Whatcom County children and families for 2023. [Ordinance.](#)

Consent Agenda:

- Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and City of Bellingham to provide funding to support the GRACE Program in the amount of \$392,000 annually.

- Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an agreement between Whatcom County and Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism in the amount of \$250,000.

Port of Bellingham

The commission met on Nov. 15. [Port minutes](#) include:

Consent Agenda was approved 3-0.

Public hearing was held on the 2023 strategic budget. No comments given.

The commission approved 3-0 the 2023 strategic budget and authorized a 1% regular property tax levy.

The commission approved 3-0 to terminate option to purchase real property and authorized an option to purchase real property with Millworks LLC, a purchase and sale agreement for real property with Mercy Housing Northwest and all related documents required to finalize the transaction. The commission had earlier gone into executive session to discuss purchase price details with Millworks and with Mercy Housing. The housing project brings with affordable housing an Early Learning Center operated by the YMCA.

The commission will meet on Dec. 6. [Agenda items](#) include:

Consent agenda:

- Reaffirm the utilization of Chmelik, Sitkin, and Davis, P.S., Attorneys at Law, as the Port's general legal counsel with an [increased rate](#) effective Jan. 1, 2023.
- Approve setting the Executive Director's annual base salary effective Jan. 1, 2023.

Motion to approve an adjustment to the severance agreement from six (6) months to twelve (12) months' [salary](#).

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Mike Sato, Managing Editor**

Salish Current is a nonprofit online newsroom serving Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit Counties. Founded in

2020, *Salish Current* exists to protect and improve democratic governance by reporting and curating local news — freely accessible to all — with independence and strict journalistic integrity.

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